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SPECIAL ISSUE : THE CINEMA

Elena Varzi extending a hand of friendship in "The Road to Hope", the 1951 Italian "Silver Laurel Award" for European films contributing to goodwill among peoples. *(See pages 3 and 7.)*

ARTICLES BY : Sir Michael Balcon, Charles Spaak, Luigi Chiarini, Bosley Crowther, Dilys Powell and Stephen Watts.

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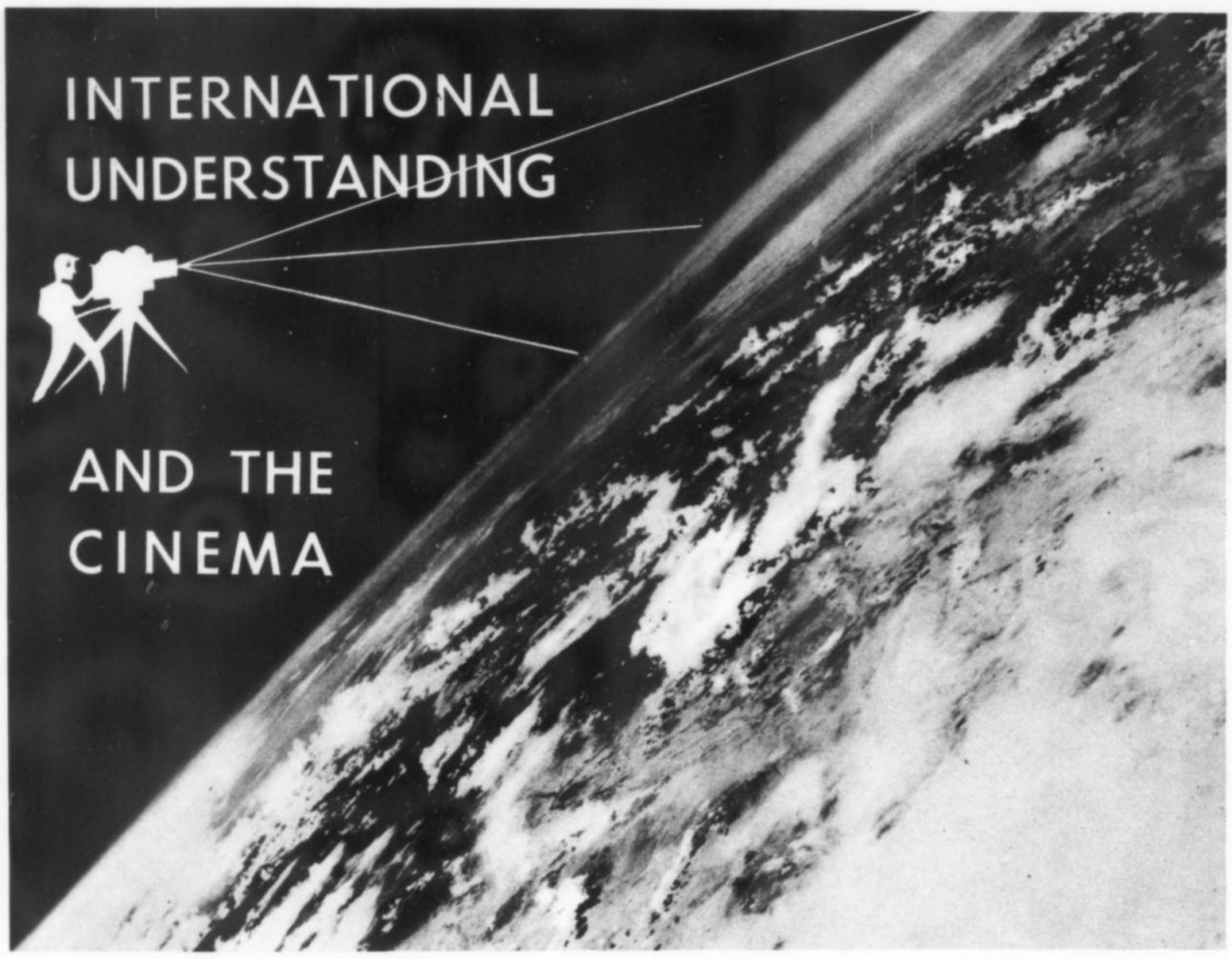


THE study of the film as a means to human understanding is not a mere intellectual exercise. It is part of a continuing study we have all got to make in our search for harmony in a tortured world. The power of the film to entertain and to distract, to move to action, to hatred and contempt, to compassion and respect, is everywhere agreed. That is probably why film is more written about than written, and why the film more than any of the other creative arts is subjected to a merciless scrutiny.

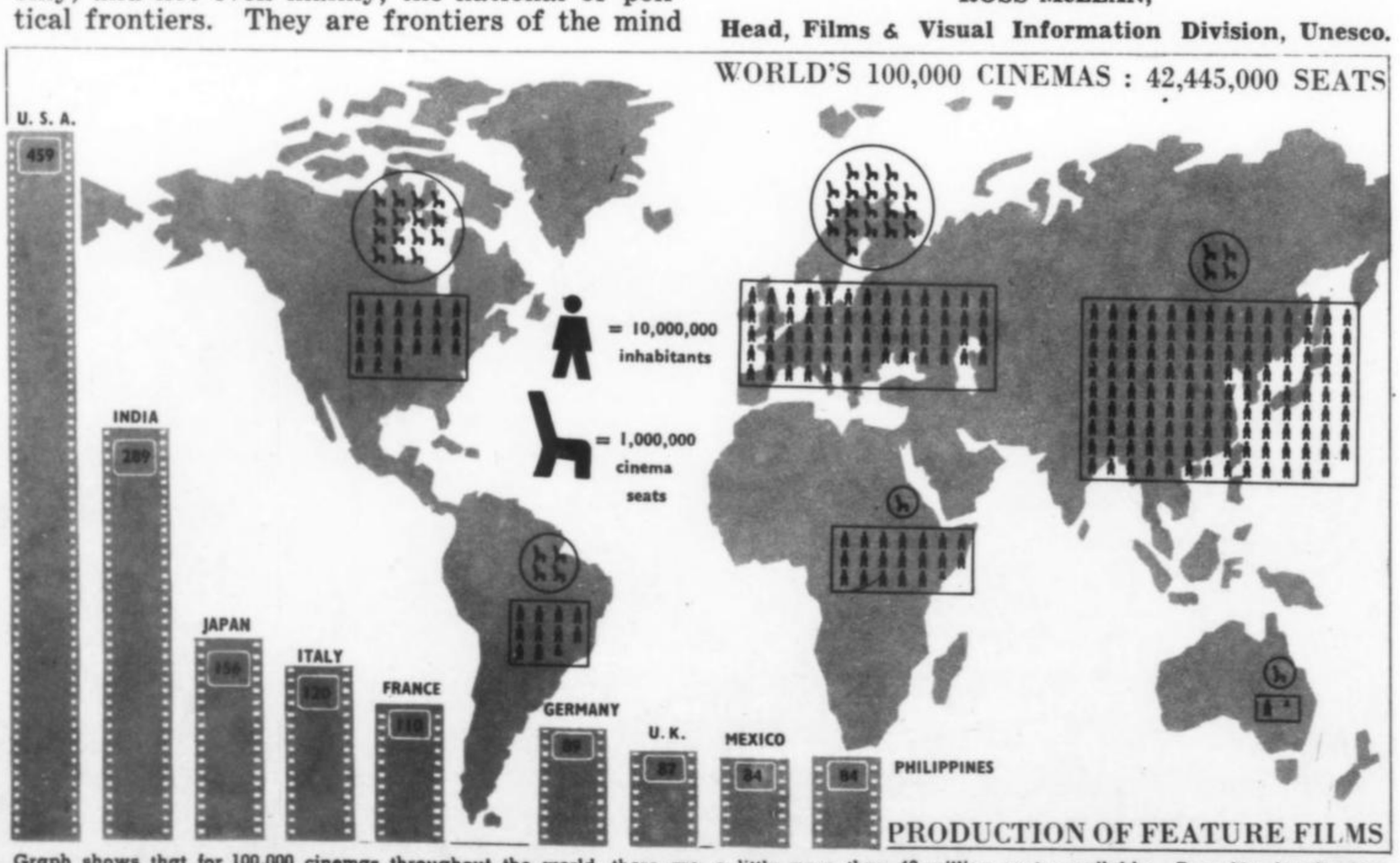
To say that the film has the power to interpret life and help to create a harmonious world is not to suggest that it should in any way depart from its duty to entertain. But it is to suggest again that in the search for themes it is possible for a greater number of writers and producers and directors and players in a greater number of countries to lift their eyes above the frontiers which divide mankind and from whatever vision they command help to create a design for life instead of a passion or an excuse for death or oblivion. Themes may be gay or sombre, flippant or serious, but it is the spirit which inspires them as well as the creative spark they bear witness to, that matters most.

The responsibility of the film is not greater than the responsibility of press or radio. But it shares with television a power to dramatize beyond the others and an opportunity to play a leading part in creating a possible and credible world.

The frontiers which divide mankind are not only, and not even mainly, the national or political frontiers. They are frontiers of the mind and the spirit which spring from limitations of training and experience, differences of memory and tradition and belief and taste, and the wilful or accidental exploitation of these limitations and differences for sinister ends. That is why so many are studying now the implications of the film for children as well as for men and women. Our generation may be hopeless, but none of us will agree that our children are, and for them especially we seek the hope that they may not suffer again the obscene horrors of the last decades. Whether the films are made by men and women in Mexico or the Argentine, in the United States or the United Kingdom, France or Italy or Poland or Denmark, in Egypt or India or Indonesia or Japan, they all have a common duty to the world's children and an opportunity greater than ever before to discharge it because of the vast challenge it presents.

This is not to say that it is or can be an easy duty to discharge. There are taboos of many sorts which make it difficult to express the faith that one has in man. Screenwriters especially are bitterly aware of this. There are forces which profit from a shattered world and which at every opportunity fetter the creative spirit. There are problems of finance and facilities and markets. There is still a vast job of research and interpretation before the duty can be done. But it is in the faith that it can be done and that it is possible for men and women to grow and develop together in creative fields of expression and research that this issue of the COURIER is founded.

ROSS McLEAN,
Head, Films & Visual Information Division, Unesco.



Graph shows that for 100,000 cinemas throughout the world, there are a little more than 42 million seats available. Raw film bands show the nine leading feature film producers of the world, the figures indicating the number of feature films produced in one year.

OPEN CITY, produced by Roberto Rossellini

SCIUSCIA, produced by Vittorio de Sica

PAISA, produced by Roberto Rossellini

THE DIFFICULT YEARS, produced by Luigi Zampa

THE SUN RISES ALWAYS, produced by Aldo Vergano

THE ITALIAN FILM:

A Mirror of Mankind's Social Responsibility

by Luigi CHIARINI

Editor, *Bianco e Nero*, Italian review of film studies

THREE fundamental factors, in my opinion, explain the importance of films as a medium for international understanding: their immense popularity and wide circulation; their direct visual character which makes them a magnificent instrument for concrete, first-hand knowledge; and their artistic qualities born of a concentration on significant detail which permit them to translate the universal through the particular.

This implies a two-fold conception of the cinema : first, as a means of achieving cultural, educational and scientific ends, and secondly as an artistic medium, for entertainment purposes. But it implies neither vulgar entertainment pandering to man's lowest instincts, nor some monstrous machine "bombarding" the brain with ideological or political dogmas, thus insulting the human dignity of the spectator because it makes no demands on his critical faculties.

It is in the light of these ideas that an assessment must be made of the Italian cinema's contribution in this stormy, conflict-ridden post-war period towards the promotion of international understanding and the active defence of fundamental human values, without which there can be no hope of real progress.

For reasons of space, and also because of the attention attracted by our neo-realist films abroad, we shall confine our remarks to "feature" films. In the field of the cultural, scientific and educational documentary film, the Italian cinema has produced little; commercial obstacles, combined with problems of distribution — soon, it is hoped, to be overcome — have unfortunately prevented these important aids to knowledge from being as widely circulated, internationally, as Italian feature films.

Wolf among Wolves

JUST as there is no such thing as "moral or immoral" art, so there is no such thing as "educative" art. This does not mean that art is a mere empty form. On the contrary, it contains the essence of all human values. Art is, in fact, the full and free affirmation of human personality in its essentials ; the true and complete expression, through the medium of significant detail, of the human spirit.

Thus art is always, by definition, moral, educative and optimistic, in that it lifts man above human passions and, while faithfully reflecting the national soul, speaks a language which is universal.

The stir made in the world by recent Italian films is due to the very fact that they have been inspired exclusively by artistic considerations — the need to express the seething passions roused by the harrowing experiences of the war; to reassert, in art, those human values which had been trampled and crushed under foot; and to combat violence, injustice and poverty by claiming respect for the human being.

That is why all the films of which we are speaking, whatever the politics of their authors, are permeated by a genuine Christian spirit. It might seem, at first sight, that art is not the prime consideration in these films, and that the producers are mainly concerned to discover a direct and vivid form of expression, free of all technical refinements and complications — to concentrate, in fact, rather on what they want to say than on how to say it. But it is the essence of art to eschew all formalism in expressing human truths.

Thus, *Roma, città aperta* (Rome, Open City), though it depicts the Italian capital under German occupation and though its characters are highly individualized, even to the point of speaking dialect, is universally understandable; in the Italians, the citizens of Rome, the spectator everywhere, whatever his nationality, sees man, his passions, his feelings and his sufferings; he sees men who, though victims of the blind brutality of war, are neither conquered nor resigned, but are capable of fighting to the bitter end for the attainment of a better world where man will no longer live like a wolf among wolves.

Similarly, *Paisà*, another film by Rossellini, shows the various types of Italians, from Sicily to the marshes of Comacchio, with their weaknesses, their miseries, their heroism and their religious faith, during the war upheaval caused by the Allied advance northwards. It depicts, through the sufferings of the Italian people, the sufferings of peoples the world over who have experienced the horrors of war.

Crude Reality

OTHER films, especially those of Visconti (*La Terra Trema* — Earthquake), De Sanctis (*Riso Amaro* — Bitter Rice) and Germi (*Il Cammino della Speranza* — The Road to Hope), give a picture of the crude and moving reality of certain aspects of Italian life, and evoke, naturally and without rhetoric, a plea for greater social justice. This is a problem that is particularly topical in present-day Italy, where social inequalities are particularly glaring; yet it is a problem that is not peculiar to Italy alone.

In the films of De Sica and Zavattini (*Sciuscià; Ladri di Bicicletti*—Bicycle Thieves; *Miracolo a Milano* — The Miracle) the social argument is centred no longer on the crowd, but on the individual; the social theme is spun around the hero and the other characters of the story, and the call for the rights of the individual is then once more generalized so as to apply to the masses.

In the work of these two producers, neorealism assumes a less ideological, a more warmly human, and one might almost say a more concrete form; the centre of gravity shifts from the people and the various social categories to their individual representative — man himself, in all his humanity, man as a worker, a son, a father, a husband, a comrade, a citizen and a member of a religious community; man who has feelings, who believes, thinks and works; in fact, our fellow man.

These films, devoid of all the artifices, embellishments and studied effects characteristic of a "spectacle", and sometimes positively stark in their simplicity, have helped to give the world a picture of Italy as it is today. Avoiding political propaganda, they have raised, on the artistic and therefore human level, a question of universal concern — the need for social justice, harmonized with the rights of the individual. These films are the expression of a new humanism; they issue a call for, and preach, real human understanding.

No "Escapism"

SUCH is the chief contribution made by recent Italian films to international understanding. Using the screen as a mirror in which men's actions are vividly reflected, they indicate, in the strongest possible way, the need for a sense of social responsibility. Films of this type are clearly the very antithesis of "escapist" entertainment.

It is possible that the historical and musical films made during this period have also helped to spread abroad a knowledge of our art and our traditions; but most important today are those works which emphasize the affinities, rather than the differences, between peoples.

The Italian cinema can, if it continues on these lines, make a valuable contribution to the development of a mutual understanding that may, in turn, sow the seeds of that common conscience which is essential to the establishment, across political and religious barriers, of understanding between the peoples. The lesson of art is always a lesson in humanity.

Side by side with feature films, it is to be hoped that in future more progress will be made in the artistic, scientific and cultural documentary, which is a potentially important medium for spreading abroad a knowledge of our traditions, our genius and our national characteristics — in a word, the soul of our country.

THE BRITISH FILM:

Showing the people of England as they really are

by Dilys **POWELL**
Film Critic, 'Sunday Times', London

PASSPORT TO PIMLICO : A sudden and strange problem of "international relations."

WHATEVER criticisms may be made of the British wartime cinema, nobody can say that it betrayed any liking for war. In fact, paradoxically enough, it was between 1940 and 1945 that British films began to make an appreciable contribution towards international understanding.

At a first glance the independent observer might say that there was nothing particularly international about the British cinema. We have rarely tackled international subjects in the way in which the Swiss have tackled them in *The Last Chance* or *Four in a Jeep*. We have passed over such current racial problems as anti-Semitism and the colour question (though a version of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* is still to come). When we have chosen some theme of racial or national relationships we have not been particularly successful in exciting popular interest. Just after the war we had an ambitious film on an important subject to show: *Men of Two Worlds*, a story of the battle against the tsetse fly and the position of the African who is torn between his European education and the traditional superstitions of his own people. But *Men of Two Worlds*, was not a popular film; and though the things it said were very well worth saying I greatly doubt whether it made much impression.

And yet I believe that the British cinema has been a very considerable factor in creating international goodwill. The obvious thing, of course, would be to point to our long list of documentaries with their impeccable democratic principles. And it is quite true that the documentary film can do a great deal to make people see one another's point of view — or, almost as important, to show the other man that his point of view is recognized; when Paul Rotha made *The World is Rich* it was evidence that people in Britain were not kept in ignorance of conditions in hungry India and war-stricken Asia. The trouble is that the documentary rarely reaches beyond an audience which is prepared for special pleading. Now and then there is an exception; for instance *Daybreak in Udi*, a delightful account of the building of a Nigerian maternity home in the teeth of the witch-doctors; here was a piece, fairly widely shown, which made its effect not by talking about progress but by showing us what charming and likable people the inhabitants of Udi really are.

Subtle Persuasion

BUT the real strength of the cinema lies in its power to persuade people who don't know they are being persuaded. That is where the American film has scored all these years; while entertaining us it has built up a great popular sympathy for America. I believe that the British cinema is making, and should make, its impact in the same way. In other words, I believe that by producing films about ourselves we shall make our best contribution to international goodwill. Our way of doing it cannot be the same as Hollywood's. America is a young and ebullient nation, and panache comes easily and naturally from her. The British are an old and disciplined people, sentimental beneath a veneer of reserve, and the British cinema must speak in their native emotional accent. That this is the right approach has been proved since the war by the success of British films with Continental audiences and minority audiences in America. To capture the attention of the American masses is another matter; let us not pretend that we have as yet begun to do that. But it is worth noting that among the most successful of our films in America have been some of the most unashamedly British : *Henry V, Hamlet, Quartet* — films which make no concessions to American taste.

The theory that the sharply national film appeals to an international audience is borne out by the reactions of the French to British films. I have to confess that I am one of the less fanatical admirers of *Brief Encounter*, and I have sometimes been puzzled by the enthusiasm of my French friends for the piece; but to my enquiries they always reply: "It's so *English!*" One might be tempted to suppose that their admiration was less for the film itself than for its evidence of British chastity, were one not confronted by enthusiasm also for two films of a very different type *Passport to Pimlico*, a thoroughly English joke in a thoroughly English setting; and *Whisky Galore*, a thoroughly Scottish joke in a thoroughly Scottish setting.

Interpreters

OFTEN, indeed, it is the improbable film which wins hearts abroad: who would have thought that *Red Shoes* would gain a prize in Japan? But probable or improbable, the films serve as interpreters. As I have said, the process of liaison began during the war, when for the first time in the cinema we began to look without self-flattery and self-denigration at ourselves. It goes on today with such quiet studies of character and background as *Morning Departure* or *The Browning Version* or *White Corridor:* films which observe the behaviour of human beings and present it with sympathy and understanding. What I want from the cinema of other nations is a truthful interpretation of human nature: I can only assume that in the long run other people have the same tastes. And we in this country have passed the stage when we could be content to be presented abroad as a nation of comic housemaids and dukes in monocles.

A RUN FOR YOUR MONEY: A comedy about London, two mining brothers from Wales, and some everyday men and women from England.

THE FEATURE CARRIES ON THE DOCUMENTARY TRADITION

by Sir Michael BALCON

One of the leading film producers in Great Britain, Sir Michael Balcon has given the world cinema public an amazing number of film successes, including *Passport to Pimlico, Whisky Galore, Kind Hearts and Coronets, Dead of Night, The Overlanders, Nicholas Nickleby, The Captive Heart, Next of Kin, They Came to a City.*

IN the British cinema, there is one outstanding success story: not the story of an individual, but of an approach, a point of view. With the reservations that any generalization requires, it can be said to have started with the documentary movement in the late 20's and early 30's. Documentary is a term notoriously difficult to define, and although we all know what it means, no satisfactory definition has yet been found. Nor will I attempt to give one: for my present purpose, it is sufficient to point out what it aimed to achieve, which, since documentarists seem also to have been prolific theorists, I can do easily in their own words. Documentary, said Paul Rotha, "has an important purpose to fulfil in bringing to life familiar things and people, so that their place in the scheme of things which we call society may be honestly assessed". And John Grierson declared that "it promised us the power of making drama from our daily events and poetry of our problems".

I need hardly say that the documentary film makers succeeded magnificently. Not only did they say things that, as everyone with the least spark of social consciousness realized, needed saying badly, but they developed new film techniques and trained new personnel, in spite of frequent lack of support and difficulties. In the period between the wars, when the British feature-film industry had too often to concentrate on mere survival, it was the quality of the documentaries that kept the reputation of the industry as a whole alive abroad. That is the greatest compliment that I, as a feature-film producer, can pay them. The value of the work they did was out of all proportion to its footage: they made propaganda without resorting to politics, and they made works of art without losing sight of their social purpose.

Then came the war, and the industry's forces combined regardless of whether they came from documentary or feature, to wield what was soon realized to be a major weapon of war: the result was naturally called feature-documentary, and equally naturally, its quality profited by this new liaison: the British war-time output as a whole was far in advance of what had gone before. This is not altogether surprising, since a national emergency always seems to act as a tremendous stimulus. What is rather surprising is that the general feeling after such an emergency—to return to the conditions that existed before as quickly as possible—did not arise in the British film industry. The feature film had learned a great lesson: its responsibility as an influence on the public, its possibilities as an informative and didactic force. The aims were now similar to those propounded by the documentaries of the 30's.

If I say therefore that the feature-film has largely taken over from the documentary, I do not in any way mean to belittle the latter. On the contrary, this state of affairs means that their propaganda has achieved its purpose: the beliefs of the few of the 30's are now widely held, their aims have become generally accepted as being worthwhile, their approach to the screen has been vindicated. Of course, at the moment, this is only the beginning of a new trend in the British industry, and is not yet completely established. But I am convinced that it is spreading, and that we are on the right lines: already a number of the better known documentarists are working in feature films: under John Grierson, the Executive Producer of one of the news groups organized by the National Film Finance Corporation, are John Eldridge and Terry Bishop, on loan from Ealing Studios, Pat Jackson and Paul Rotha have both just directed their first feature film, and I think it significant that in the programme on *Future trends* in a documentary series organized by the British Film Institute, *Seven Days to Noon* should be shown in extract.

Let us examine, then, a little more closely, how the feature film today is carrying on the documentary tradition. More and more it is using for its backgrounds parts of the contemporary scene such as made the subject matter of the past documentary: farm, slum, factory. More and more it makes use of characters and action arising out of contemporary problems, such as were handled by the documentarists: labour problems, class problems, problems of psychology. More and more it is prepared to break away from the studio and its hothouse plots, to use real places and real people. Of course, there are disadvantages: the problem that makes a background in a feature film can often not be examined as carefully as might be desirable, as profoundly as could be done in a documentary concentrating only on the one subject. But on the other hand, the potential influence of the feature film is much greater: not only does it reach a wider audience, but since feature-films by their nature must treat all problems in terms of individual human beings, they avoid the slightly impersonal application to "the people" that often mars documentaries, and, therefore, bring home to the individual human geings that make up the audience the problems in a much more personal and impressive way.

That I think, is the road we should continue to travel, but it still requires a new approach from many people. Above all, it means that all concerned with the creation of script and film must become careful students of the contemporary world; they must know and feel their people and their country, the difficulties and joys that are the stuff of ordinary life, so that they can recreate it on the screen. If the film industries of all countries did this honestly and consistently, each bringing their own people to the screens of the world, then indeed we should have made documentary unnecessary, we should be making drama from our daily events and poetry of our problems! In the meantime, the film we are at present producing at Ealing deals with the clash between old and new in colonial administration, and the next will be about the probation system.

I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS

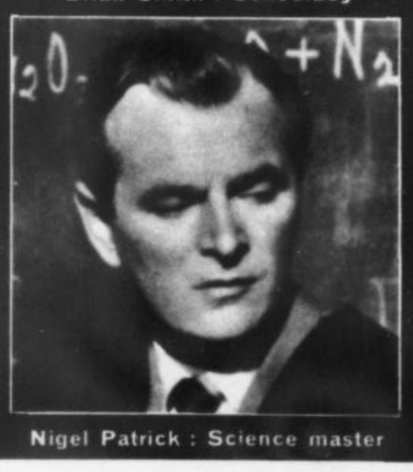
WHISKY GALORE

THE BROWNING VERSION

Wilfred White : Headmaste

Michael Redgrave : Classics master

Brian Smith : Schoolboy



Nigel Patrick : Science master

ALL THE KING'S MEN : The ugly career of an incipient American dictator.

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES : Three soldiers return home from war.

THE AMERICAN FILM:

More than just Sex and Gangsters, A Trend toward Social Dramas Exposing Prejudice and Injustice

by **Bosley CROWTHER**
Film Critic, 'New York Times'

THERE was a time when it was standard — among the sharper observers, at least — to take a dim view of the social and intellectual contributions of American films, particularly with respect to the picture of American life which they presented to the world. Fair and responsible critics, both at home and abroad, could find little more in Hollywood movies than glorifications of sex and gold, of Cinderella and gangsters, of romance and opulence, as though these were solely representative of the culture and interest of our land.

And, indeed, the objections of such critics were not entirely unjustified, for there was a time when American movies were dubious mirrors of the American way of life, as well as unflattering reflectors of the substantial nature of mankind. Sensations such as gangsterism were blatantly overemphasized and human behaviour inconsistent with nature and logic was displayed. Unfortunately, the strange impression of America thus transmitted to the world — and, for that matter, to many of our own people with limited horizons here at home — established a lurid image of American culture that was dangerously false. It still persists in some quarters and remains to be dispelled.

No one can claim that American movies are free of all faults today or that they now constitute ideal ambassadors of enlightenment and inspiration to the world. Hollywood still makes lots of cheap films which follow the hackneyed formulas. It also grinds out some costly "epics" which gild human nature with bright romance. And it is a singular misfortune of film commerce that virtually all of America's films, the cheap ones as well as the fine ones, are sent all over the world, which means that the films of lesser virtues inevitably predominate in quantity.

And yet a close observation of American films over the past six years — that is to say, of our feature pictures released since World War II — has conveyed the gratifying realization that American producers have become more sharply aware of the responsibility of the motion picture medium as a cultural force for social good than ever before.

Frank Exposures

A HASTY review of the best films in this period demonstrates, first of all, that a greater impulse towards reality and candour has pervaded American films. An outstanding trend in the post-war years has been towards dramas which frankly expose the festering cankers of intolerance and injustice in modern society. In a sharp melodrama entitled *Crossfire*, the existence of anti-Semitism in America was recognized for the first time, this unpleasant subject having previously been tabooed, and this was followed by the film, *Gentlemen's Agreement*, which further disrobed the evil of anti-Semitic bias.

The peculiar and complicated presence of anti-Negro prejudice in this country has also been the subject of a remarkable series of post-war films. Beginning with *Home of the Brave*, a vivid drama of racial discrimination among soldiers in the Pacific during the war, this subjects has been pursued with a genuine fervour for the ideals of democracy in such further films as *Pinky, Lost Boundaries, No Way Out*, and *Intruder in the Dust*, the latter a superlative achievement in cinema art as well.

This regard for social justice and understanding among men has recently been combined effectively with Hollywood's talent for vivid war films in a picture called *Go For Broke !* — a drama of the heroic action of an American regimental combat team made up of American-born Japanese soldiers, termed Nisei, in World War II. And even some candid acknowledgment of injustice to American Indians that occurred in the period of westward expansion has been made in such otherwise conventional outdoor films as *Fort Apache* and *Broken Arrow*, thus violating the formula for the standard Western film.

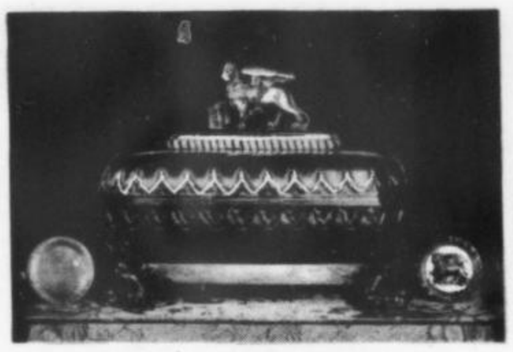
No Punches Pulled

PERHAPS the most widely impressive of America's post-war films, both at home and abroad. has been the drama, *The Best Years of Our Lives*. And that is because this picture not only understood in universal terms the emotions of servicemen returning home after the war, but it fairly expressed the veteran's yearning for a fuller democracy and opportunity for all in the post-war world.

The American scene — in its light and its dark sides — has also been authentically displayed in such fine and flavoursome pictures as *Sitting Pretty, Father of the Bride, Father's Little Dividend, The Jackpot, Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street, Born Yesterday* and *All About Eve*, which are only a few of the many rich American post-war comedies ; and in *The Asphalt Jungle, The Snake Pit, The Quiet One, Sunset Boulevard, Ace in the Hole* and *Treasure of Sierra Madre*, which have been dramas of the darker side. And a special word might be mentioned for the picture, *All the King's Men*, because it pulled no punches in displaying the vulnerability of the mob to the demagogy of an aspiring dictator and the viciousness of such a man. Its story was based upon the career of the American, Huey Long.

And, then, of course, there have been any number of smooth and light-hearted American films — such things as *The Jolson Story* and the comedies of Danny Kaye — which have had no particular social content, save a genial overflow of good will. It is possible that such pictures also serve to create understanding among men.

To be sure, the American film industry should not be credited with a paramount aim to make pictures that will be ambassadors of culture and enlightenment in the world. Its desire is to turn out pictures that will attract and absorb an audience. But in catering to the public's interests in the really pertinent dramas of our times, the American producers may be said to be contributing much more constructively than ever before to the good of man.



THERE ARE OSCARS, CUPS, AND PLAQUES GALORE, BUT HERE IS

A FILM AWARD WITH A REAL PURPOSE

by Stephen WATTS

Author of a syndicated film column appearing in Canada, Latin America, Italy, Portugal, Japan. London film correspondent, 'New York Times'.

THE power — or at least the potential — of a film to communicate information, to convey ideas and impressions at between peoples, has long been generally recognized. The most obvious example is that knowledge of and beliefs (right or wrong) about the American "way of life" in most parts of the civilized world are in the main based on contact, over the years, with the ubiquitous Hollywood film.

Yet remarkably little has been done outside the educational documentary and the frankly documentary film, to make constructive use of this effective agency for better international understanding. In the Western world, of course, there is always the fear that anything which might conceivably be branded as propaganda in the realm of entertainment will be suspect and that this reaction will militate against the commercial success at which all entertainment films are aimed.

It is worth noticing that this does not apply in the other half of the world; the London "Times" recently reported from Singapore an intensive campaign in South East Asia to secure the widest distribution of Russian and Chinese films, which are always Communist in content, and uncompromising in their determination to put ideological inspiration before mere entertainment. But there have been from time to time in the West examples of the fact that a well-documented fiction film can do a great deal more than tell a time-passing, boy-meets-girl story which presents in the last analysis, nothing more than a belief that total, absolute and constant bliss is within the reach of all.

Mostly the examples have been unconsciously brought into being; at least they have sprung from no more than a desire to face up to life as it surrounds the creators of the film. An "Open City" or "Paisa" conveyed vividly what life in war-time Italy was like, but that was mainly because the producers, short of equipment, studios and money, but abounding in ideas, found their subjects in life, treated them with telling directness and simplicity, and photographed them in natural, real settings. Whatever "message" they carried was integral and unselfconscious.

Recently a Swiss-sponsored, multilingual film about the Four Power regime in Vienna, "Four in a Jeep", has been earning the kind of praise which suggests again what can be done along those lines. True, at the Cannes film festival the Russians protested, presumably finding the leading Russian character portrayed as insufficiently heroic, but the film was highly praised, as it was again on its London presentation and at the Berlin film festival. There, although the winner of the German language Silver Laurel award, to go forward for the Golden Laurel final at Venice in September, was a locally-produced picture, "Herrliche Zeiten", "Four in a Jeep" was specially commended and will in fact be a candidate for the Golden Laurel in its own multi-lingual category.

This film serves as an admirable example of what the Golden Laurel award is all about; some of the reviews of it, using phrases such as "a plea for greater understanding between human beings", are in close parallel to the declared purpose of the award, defined by its donor, Mr David O. Selznick, as "to pay tribute to those motion pictures, produced by Europeans in Europe which have made the greatest contribution to mutual understanding and goodwill between the peoples of the free and democratic world".

Last year at Venice the Golden Laurel award (then being contested for the first time) went to the Italian film "Donne Senza Nome".

Awards in the film business are legion. "Oscars", cups, medals, scrolls and plaques, even (in Britain) Henry Moore statuettes are presented for the best this and the most outstanding that. For the winners, they make prestige and useful advertising material; too often they also blatantly glorify the donor.

But the Golden Laurel award has the virtues, firstly of being concerned with more long-term, humane values than are usually considered in the cinema, and also of being free from the taint that the donor's motives are disingenuous and commercially rooted.

Selznick is an American film magnate, but he has so defined the qualifications for entry that no American film can compete, far less win; indeed the winner, by reason of the kudos gained, is in a better position to compete for a place on the world's screens against the product of Hollywood and even Selznick himself. The final jury in New York, which passes judgment on the "heat" winners from the six language-groups, includes such public figures as Dr. Ralph Bunche, of UN and Nobel Peace Prize fame, Mr Herbert Bayard Swope, Mr Edward Murrow, Mr John Gunther and Dr. D'Harnoncourt of the New York Museum of Modern Art.

This year thirty-two films from seven countries have been entered. Apart from "Four in a Jeep" and "Herrliche Zeiten", are the "local" winners from the United Kingdom ("Trio"), France ("Justice est faite"), Italy ("Il Cammino della Speranza", or "The Road to Hope"), and Scandinavia ("Medan Staden Sover").

"Trio" made from three Somerset Maugham stories, has some characteristically shrewd and salted observation of the British character. The French and Italian pictures are graver subjects — one deals with the task of a jury of ordinary, people faced with a "mercy killing" trial, the other with poor émigrants from Sicily who trek towards the French border in the hope of finding work.

Whoever may win, the contest can hardly fail to stimulate European film production and to direct producers' minds to an aspect of their work, and its impact on other people which they often seem dangerously to ignore.

One American commentator on the Golden Laurel scheme has written "I wish Europe would clinch matters by establishing its own award for the American film which provides the soundest information on life in the United States". That is an extension of Mr Selznick's idea which is worthy of consideration in the appropriate quarters this side of the Atlantic. There cannot be too many film-makers aiming their work at the target of greater mutual understanding.

DONNE SENZA NOME. (Italy) The plight of stateless women in a D.P. camp. Golden Laurel Award, 1950.

ATTACK ON RACISM WINS BRITISH FILM ACADEMY AWARD FOR 1950

The British Film Academy awards an annual prize for the best feature film illustrating one or more of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. Called The United Nations Award, the prize was created in 1948 by the British Film Academy in response to a request by the Film Division of the U.N. The Academy Council reserves the right to withdraw the United Nations Award if none of the films, in their opinion, attains sufficient merit to justify its presentation. This was the case in 1948 when no award was presented. The first film to win the award, presented in 1949, was the Swiss-American M.G.M. production The Search which tells the moving story of a little Czech boy — one of the thousands of D.P. children separated from their parents during and after the last World War. Last year, the award went to the M.G.M. American production Intruder in the Dust, a full-length feature film based on William Faulkner's novel attacking discrimination against Negroes in the United States (above). Henry Moore, the distinguished British sculptor designed a statuette for the award. A replica of this in bronze is formally presented to the director of the winning film who receives it on behalf of the production studio. The bronze is kept by the studio until passed to the next Academy winner.

NACHTWACHE. (Germany) Silver Laurel Award, 1950.

CHILDREN'S FILMS...

HOWEVER much adults may regret the rôle that the cinema plays in the lives of their children, it is no good harking back to the days "When I was a child...". Good or bad, dangerous or healthy, the cinema is here, and it has taken a part in our life which cannot be excluded.

Also we can do nothing about the fact that children form a large part of the cinema-going public. The Honourable Mrs. Henrietta Bower, member of Britain's Departmental Committee on Children and the Cinema, has given the following significant figures (1).

Out of a total of 7,000,000 British children aged between five and fifteen, 1,250,000 go to the pictures at least twice a week, and 550,000 at least three times. Three shows a week mean that the fifteen-year-old has already seen 1,560 films—and this does not include educational film shows given in the schools.

(1) *Mentioned by Henri Storck in "Le Film Récréatif pour Spectateurs Juvéniles", published by Unesco*

Financial Difficulties

OBVIOUSLY, therefore, the cinema plays a big rôle in the formation of the child. If it helps to give adults certain ideas about this world, how much more so when it comes to the more receptive and emotional youngster, who is particularly vulnerable to psychological shocks, with their immeasurable after-effects.

But it would be wrong to say that only in the cinema does he get these shocks. Apart from what life itself teaches him, he has other means of learning about the world — books and newspapers, for instance. The cinema is of course, different from these, but its effects can be judged by a comparison with them.

Children's literature has existed for centuries. It has its good points, as well as its bad, but at least it is written to suit its readers. It has had its famous authors : Andersen, Lewis Carroll, Jules Verne. And generally speaking, children read the books and magazines written for them, rather than those meant for adults.

But it is just the opposite at the cinema. It is adult films which children see most frequently. Westerns, gangster films, adventure or love, news, documentaries and cartoons pass before their eyes with that

The photos on this page w ake
Mrs. Henrietta Bower, a m r o
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...F

hypnotic force which forbids one's attention to wander from that screen in the middle of the darkness.

Producing special films for children means all sorts of problems — financial ones, for instance. What producer will undertake to make a picture which he knows will not be accepted by the usual circuits? It would not show a profit perhaps in 15 or 20 years.

Mrs. Bower's solution for this problem is assistance from governments, who would create an international pool of children's films. Interesting in itself, it is only a suggestion, and we must content ourselves with things as they are.

The scarcity of special films means that people who organize children's film shows have first of all to choose, among films made for adults, those which are most suitable for young spectators. This poses a question which remains to be answered satisfactorily : the criteria for making this selection.

It is the fashion in certain circles to blame the cinema for everything. Children's misdeeds and crimes are its fault. It always leads them, if not to delinquency, at least to immorality, and shows them how to behave like gangsters. Its eroticism—even if nothing more than a kiss—seriously trouble the young cinemagoers.

Must all this be guarded against ? The answer is : No, it does not matter very much.

Indifferent

WE have a tendency to judge the influence of the cinema on children by what it does to us. But it is quite different with youngsters. Dr. Le Moal, who has made an important study of this matter, declares that, from five years of age to puberty, love complications are matters of indifference, even boredom, to children. Only girls over 16 prefer love stories; the boys continue to opt for adventure or historical films.

Accusing the cinema of fostering

aken with a special infra-red camera by the Hon.
r of the Departmental Committee of the Home
in England which studied the effects of the cinema
photographs", Mrs. Bower states, "are proof of
inment films for children". Her enquiries have
o not show fright at an incident in a film often
es, because most of the films seen by children are
nd hence do not take into account the emotions,
Mrs. Bower has issued a call for the production of
and entertain the child and the creation of an
lms sponsored by governments.

R GROWN-UPS ONLY ?

by Jean BLOCH-MICHEL

ild delinquency is to ignore the
cial and psychological conditions
hich are at the root of anti-social
titudes—lack of adaptability, bad
mily conditions, misery, promiscuity.
is quite wrong to imagine that a
ngster film will lead a boy to crime
after the cinema, he can return
me to a happy, prosperous and unit-
family. As for the lad who lives
a slum and in the street, and sees
s drunken parents quarrel each
ght, does he really need the cinema
teach him lawlessness?

Grave Problems

NEVERTHELESS, it would be wrong to say that the cinema does not se grave problems with regard to ildren. Very often it gives shocks, th traces that remain. You have ly to look at some of Mrs. Bower's fra-red photos taken in darkened nemas and shown in these pages. Such emotions can have dangerous fects on such young human beings. ut the large number of studies of is problem have produced very dismilar opinions on its effects.

Richard Ford, in his book "Children the Cinema", gives the results of n enquiry made by cinema club irectors into the subjects which rightened children most. They were: hots of the mysterious, of the nknown, of terror; scenes taken in he dark showing ghosts, skeletons nd witches; war crimes; brawls hich included close-ups of criminal aces.

Can we accept fully the results of his enquiry? Apparently not. Answering a question put by Mrs. Bower, child gave what she regards as a pical answer : "I like ghost films, ecause I know it could not happen me." Note that this child did not y that these scenes made him rightened—in fact, he enjoyed this pe of fear.

Let us take three films meant especially for children : Pinocchio, Snow-White and the Thief of Bagdad. M. rmand Lanous finds in all of them sequences which give violent shocks. When Pinocchio was swallowed by the whale, the children were frightened to see him inside the monster (the young spectator identifies himself very much more with the hero than adults do). In Snow-White, it was the fairy being changed into a witch which affected them most, while in the Thief of Bagdad they were scared by the nightmare fight with Faraignée.

What about adult films which keep on showing scenes of violence as their principal theme? Mr. P. Mayer declares in the "Sociology of the film" that often children have been so impressed by a picture that they have nightmares and insomnia as a result. Some films leave memories which are not effaced for months.

That children undergo violent emotional disturbances as a result of seeing films meant for adults—as well as those made for children—cannot be denied. Only the extent of these shocks is disputed. Some say they can last a long time. Others, like Dr. Elliott Jach, contradict this. Dr. Elliott Jach declares that horrible scenes are perhaps a good thing in that they give the child an outlet for his anxieties and instincts. For the cinema is an art—or a distraction—which only calls for its spectator to respond spontaneously, temporarily, and with no long-term call on his emotions.

The cinema is thus a cultural element that is new and, one can even say, strange. Perhaps it is too soon to weigh up its effects.

But one fact cannot be ignored : the cinema demands above all high finance. To be profitable it must please the greatest possible number of people. That is to say, it must follow at the same time as it creates. And that, perhaps, is its greatest danger to culture.

The cinema nowadays is at the root of many prejudices—or at least it does nothing to combat them. On the other hand it often presents to children a view of the world and of life which has little connection with reality.

Here, for instance, is a list of "clichés" of the British and American cinema which Mr. Roger Manvell has gathered together in his book "Film" :

> Luxury, especially associated with women, is normal.
>
> The full-time pursuit of women by unoccupied businessmen and rich young rulers is normal.
>
> Men are a source of money for women.
>
> Sex is probably the most important sensation in life.
>
> Things of the spirit are either funny, eccentric, charlatan or ever so wonderful. (Art is usually debunked as artiness, religion as mania, mysticism as a yearn in soft focus.)
>
> To be foreign is to be under suspicion. To be Eastern is to be horrific.

Clearly it is not only in the British and American film that one can gather such stupidities. They are pretty general.

Evil and Poverty

TAKE the last "cliché" in this list : the cinema's representation of the foreigner. This may be the only viewpoint many children get for years. It can well be the basis of misunderstandings, with serious consequences for the future of their country.

There are, of course, exceptions. All — whether children or adults — who saw "The Last Chance" got an opportunity of understanding better the problems which passions had put in a wrong light. In this film, no matter what language is spoken, everybody is just — a human being.

The conventions which, by force of circumstances, the cinema must respect affects its best work. Thus, the conclusions reached by the British report on children's entertainment films show that, in order to please children, the actors who play the less-attractive rôles must bear the conventional signs of their badness — dirty clothes and rags, and ugly faces (which, however, must not be repulsive.)

M. Henri Storck comments on this peculiar modern tendency to link evil with poverty. In the days of melodrama, he recalls, the bad person was the cruel and powerful nobleman.

Dangerous Ideas

IT is easy to see the danger which can arise from this linking of the evil and the poor. After having given children a view of life which they are most unlikely to find in reality, is the cinema going to add some dangerous ideas about the superiority of some, while others get no less dangerous notions about their inferiority? This happens often, and the cinema, by its conventions, makes it occur still more frequently—thus tending to make the divisions of society even more rigid.

To want to transform the cinema would be ridiculous. But its possibilities are immense. There is no human progress that cannot better humanity and bring it closer together — unless it is allowed to worsen man's lot and teach him to hate.

It is not fruitless to draw the attention of those responsible for the evolution of the cinema to the most subtle, the most far-reaching and the most serious consequences of their activities.

Whether the makers of films like it or not, whether they do something about it or ignore it, the cinema is a new aspect of culture. The cinema must not forget as it forges ahead that culture forms part of it.

THE FIRST CINEMATIC ENCYCLOPAEDIA

FRENCH THOUGHT IN PICTURES

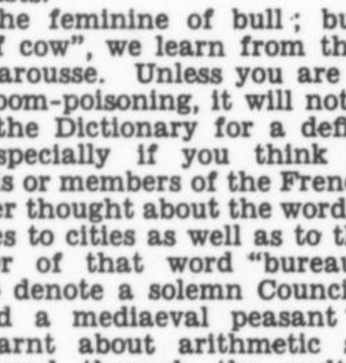
by Yves HACQUARD

AFTER the passage of two hundred years the "Encyclopédie Filmée" is carrying on the tradition of Diderot and the great Encyclopaedists.

"Cow is the feminine of bull; bull is the masculine of cow", we learn from the French dictionary Larousse. Unless you are suffering from mushroom-poisoning, it will not occur to you to ask the Dictionary for a definition of Amanites, especially if you think they are animal fossils or members of the French Union. Have you ever thought about the word "artery", which applies to cities as well as to the bloodstream? Or of that word "bureau", which has come to denote a solemn Council after it once clothed a mediaeval peasant? What have you learnt about arithmetic since you first stammered through the multiplication table?

The month of April 1951 marked a milestone in the history of the cinema, when authoritative representatives of French letters, arts and sciences joined with scenario-writers to revive the tradition of the eighteenth-century Encyclopaedists. Duly defined, commented upon and expressed in the form of pictures, words will follow one another upon the screen in a series of films which will make up a cinematic encyclopaedia available to the general public.

It is a big task with many difficulties, not the least of which is the fact that, despite the cinema's ideals and successes in many new fields, it still continues to be regarded chiefly as a means of recreation. The scholar may



give credit to the producer of educational films and make the necessary intellectual effort to retain knowledge presented in a more or less didactic form; but the average cinema-goer, who seeks an escape from time and space, a journey to what-might-have-been, will not willingly exchange it for an analysis of the meanings of words, however humorous or interesting they may be.

Diderot discovered the educational influence of faithful reproduction two centuries ago. His Encyclopaedia owed a great part of its initial success to an illustration which pleased the Royal favourite, Madame de Pompadour. It was a detailed diagram showing how her stockings could be woven. She was also interested in finding a good description of how cosmetics were made. The admirably engraved plates for the different crafts determined their vocation for generations of Europeans. Dispensing with unnecessary comment, the picture became an organic link in the story and made it possible to secure greater objectivity or a subtle distortion of reality.

In the course of its growth, the cinema has developed steadily towards an ideal marriage between language and sensation. The talking film has produced science or art documentaries as well as sound and spoken newsreels: the picture needs, at the same time that it fears, the language which confirms or annuls it, while words find in pictures virgin soil for the development of their harmonies, that void and silence which are the essence of poetry.

Above all, the creators of the cinema encyclopaedia are striving to avoid vulgarity, the circulation of cheap knowledge. Like La Fontaine, they want to instruct and to amuse at the same time and have endeavoured to assemble at the outset all the material necessary to success.

The Editorial Committee for the Film Encyclopaedia includes such well-known writers and novelists, essayists, philosophers and dramatists as Marcel Achard, Alexandre Arnoux, Jean Cocteau, Pierre Descaves, Roger Ferdinand, Professeur Monder, Léon Moussinac, Marcel Pagnol and Raymond Queneau; jurists, high officials and political personalities such as Madame Georges Bidault, Julien Cain, Maurice Garçon; humorists like Jean Rigaux and Jean Effel; the Director of French radio and television, Wladimir Porché; and a galaxy of scenario-writers — Jean Benoît-Lévy, Marcel Carné, André Cayatte, René Clair and Jean Grémillon. Jean Marin is Secretary-General.

These modern encyclopaedists will be at li-

berty to deal with each subject just as they think fit, without any definite style being laid down. The encyclopaedia will rely on inspiration, on the results that diverse temperaments can produce with the cinema's means of expression. It plans to give young people a chance to show what they can do and to incorporate as many new ideas as possible.

Filmgoers will be able to see Pierre Kast explaining the mystery of numbers, the key to the universe. Madame Georges Bidault will try to show — in colours — that red-and-white mushrooms cultivated by her husband are better than any grown in the ground.

Seated at his worktable, Raymond Queneau will humorously meditate before us on the most abstruse questions of arithmetic. He will ask how he can be sure that he really has five fingers, will recall that no cotton reels are equal mathematically to no corkscrews and that there is only one chance in a billion that a saucepan which is put over a fire will freeze up.

The idea is to draw the spectator's attention insensibly towards wider philosophic or moral perspectives. Blue, Jean Grémillon tells us, is the colour of the sky, of the policeman's breeches and of the Virgin's cloak. The Côte d'Azur ceases to be azure in Italy, where blue symbolizes force and skill. But it is the filmmaker Marcel Pagliero who reproduces the delicacy and purity of blue by a very lovely bare-shouldered woman wearing a necklace of blue stones.

Work on a dozen words beginning with the letter "A" is to be completed by the end of this year. Pierre Laroche will gather together all the meanings of Age. Madame Simon will sing of Actors. Colette Audry will attack Absence. Alexandre Arnoux will visit the Amazon and its Amazons, while Jean Marin climbs Atlas to look at the Atlantic.

The encyclopaedists not only hope for distribution of their work through the normal circuits, but also to enter into agreements with educational organizations and with television networks. A dubbed commentary in different languages will bring their lively and imaginative survey of the French language to many countries.

In this way a cinematic achievement with rich possibilities will carry to the four corners of the earth a message of culture, intelligence and liberty. With regard to the last item, it is true, André Gillois observes, at the end of his piece on Automaton, that it will be some time before the encyclopaedists reach the letter "L", adding, however, a trifle cynically, that people are used to this long wait for Liberty.

Briefly Noted

ENGLAND IS NOW SYNCHRONIZING English language sound tracks on foreign films for the first time, following an exchange agreement signed in Rome. Films imported from Italy are in future to be shown in English. The first Italian production to be shown in English dubbing is **Bitter Rice.** It is hoped that six Italian films will be synchronized into English every year.

★

EDUCATORS IN THE BELGIAN CONGO are demonstrating the value of literacy by means of a narrative film entitled **Savoir Lire.** It tells a simple story of a young man, Alphonse, who gets into all kinds of difficulties and loses a chance to get a job because he cannot read. **Savoir Lire** is being effectively used by mobile film units taking part in the Congo's literacy campaigns.

★

ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA FILMS — the largest producer of educational films in the world—provides 70 per cent of all films used in American classrooms. This American organization has produced over 500 titles covering fields from the **Adventures of Bunny Rabbit** to **Electrodynamics** and the **Molecular Theory of Matter.** Versions in 13 foreign languages are also available for use in classrooms abroad.

★

A REVOLUTIONARY THREE-DIMENSIONAL FILM, Around is Around, has been produced for the Festival of Britain by Normal McLaren, the Canadian animated film producer who has gained international fame for his daring technique of painting or etching on raw film without the use of the camera. The novelty of this ten-minute film, produced by the National Film Board of Canada in collaboration with the British Film Institute, is that it provides three-dimension quality both in sound and in images. Members of the audience are provided with special spectacles which make the images appear to stand out from the screen, while the sound "moves away" from the screen in all directions at the same time. Experiments in three-dimensional films are under way in a number of countries.

★

AT LEAST 42 COUNTRIES IMPOSE CUSTOM DUTIES and other restrictions on the importation of films, according to "Trade Barriers to Knowledge", a recent Unesco publication. These will be alleviated for newsreels and educational, scientific and cultural films as soon as two Unesco-sponsored international conventions enter into force. The first, covering films of educational, scientific or cultural character, has been signed by 18 countries and ratified by four. The second grants duty-free admission to newsreels imported by organizations. It has been signed by 23 countries and ratified by three. Both Unesco agreements require 10 ratifications to become operative.

★

UNESCO FILM COUPONS. Film projectors, 16-millimetre raw film and other film materials can be obtained by individuals in "soft currency" countries from suppliers in "hard currency" countries through Unesco's Film Coupon Scheme. So far 14 of Unesco's Member States have joined this scheme, including all the main film-supplying countries. Out of a total of nearly one and a half million dollars' worth of Unesco Coupons put into circulation, approximately 10 per cent have been issued for the purchase of educational films. The Egyptian Ministry of Public Health, for example, recently ordered 19 documentary films, provided with Arabic sound-tracks, covering such subjects as home-nursing, first-aid, the common cold and dental care. Another scheme, Unesco Gift Coupons (see COURIER, March 1951) also can be used to buy educational films and film projectors.

★

THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC has created an annual film prize called the "Theodore" for producers, authors and actors. Prizes are given not to leading stars but to outstanding beginners. Awards are also made for films judged the most thought-provoking, the most democratic, for the most striking treatment of a social theme, and for the best development of a European idea, as well as for the best cultural and fictional productions.

★

LA MONTAGNE EST VERTE (The Mountain is Green), a medium-length documentary dealing with the emancipation of slaves in the former French colonies, has received the patronage of the United Nations Film Board for its high ideals and first-class technical quality. This French film, produced by J.K. Raymond-Millet and directed by Jean Lehérissey, is a tribute to the memory of Victor Schoelcher whose life-long fight for the abolition of slavery in Martinique and Guadeloupe led to an emancipation law signed by the provisional government of the Second French Republic in 1848. **La Montagne est verte,** produced without financial help from the United Nations, is an example of how the cinema can make the principles of the Declaration of Human Rights more wide known.

★

THE USE OF MOBILE CINEMA and radio vans in fundamental education is surveyed in a Unesco book just published. The survey shows that wherever the vans have been used their effects have been excellent, particularly where they serve areas lacking cinemas and electric power supply. The booklet is a practical guide to the best uses for these vans, complete with blueprints for their arrangement and detailed information on the best equipment available.

★

MOROCCAN YOUTH are seeing more and better films these days, thanks to the efforts of a film association set up in Casablanca in 1949. Performances of films chosen for their quality and educational value are open to members who range upwards from ten years old.

★

THE TASK AHEAD is the title of a new twenty-minute documentary film produced by the Film Division of Unesco on some of the Organization's activities in different countries and the work of the Secretariat in Paris. The film is distributed in 16 and 35 millimetres with sound tracks in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Arabic, Hindustani, and Italian.

" JUSTICE EST FAITE "

MR. FILM CENSOR...

"Must Everything in the Garden Be Lovely?"

" RETOUR A LA VIE "

by Charles SPAAK

President, Screen Writers Guild of France, 1950-51

How can the cinema help in fostering mutual understanding and, hence, mutual esteem, between the nations of the world? This is an inspiring subject for people who are given to long speeches, and one which inevitably calls forth the most optimistic platitudes. Of course it could serve those ends, but the organization and censorship of film production is such that the result is quite different. It is precisely because the screen could give us an intimate insight into the life of people in other lands that governments take such vigilant care to ensure that only an official picture is given of the areas under their control. It should not be forgotten that, of all media of expression, the cinema everywhere enjoys the least freedom, being the victim of two equally detestable censorship measures : firstly, with regard to the home production of films, and secondly, with regard to the showing of foreign films. In the first case, there must be no allusion to any controversial topic ; in the second case, whenever a problem which the government considers dangerous is touched upon, the people in one country are not allowed to find out what their neighbours think of it. So, each nation says to the other : I should like to have the ideas that your government allows you to impart, but only if your ideas are exactly in line with what my government allows me to utter. So long as this is accepted, nations are very willing to exchange information, to get to understand and esteem one another. Yet in all solemnity, responsible people wonder what part the cinema can play in the lofty task of fostering friendship between the nations by helping them to understand each other's social, intellectual or religious characteristics.

Both entertainment and documentary films are victims of the same system. The latter which, as their name implies, should contain only documentary evidence, are subjected to an even more rigorous control than the others, and very little confidence can be placed in their objectivity.

Everywhere censors suppress films whose purpose is not in accordance with accepted tradition, and film producers are paralyzed by fear of censorship. What can the Anglo-Saxon countries have learnt, for instance, from films produced in Paris during the past ten years? That you can sit at tables on the pavement in front of all the big cafés, that exotic dance steps are performed in cellars, that married couples insist on sleeping in the same bed, and that some depraved individuals have a misguided affection for ladies whom they have not married. All that amounts to very little. But what have they revealed of France's problems and struggles? And what film producer would dare to allude to such matters? When Autant-Lara, producer of *Le Diable au corps* wanted to tell the story of a conscientious objector, when André Cayatte, producer of *Justice est faite* — I am deliberately quoting only well-known films — tried to describe the Seznec affair (the unfortunate Breton who did twenty years' hard labour for a murder which no one now believes he was guilty of), they both met with such difficulties that they had to abandon their original ideas. Don't mention war, don't mention justice! If they are not religious, but want to express their views on religion, if they wish to describe social conditions which they consider unsatisfactory, if they want to express opinions on money, freedom, love, life or death, let them beware, for the censor's eye is on them!

What information value, then, can films have abroad if they reflect nothing but official or conventional views? "Everything in the garden is lovely..." It is always the same story. In our comfortable seat in the darkened cinema, we are lulled into thinking that all is for the best in the best possible of worlds; any uneasiness aroused by the newsreel is dispelled by the documentary film and the feature film that follow.

Although they have revealed so little of the nation's inner, secret life, have French film producers managed, at least, to further international understanding through films inspired by a generous desire for reconciliation with a former foe? A film which leaps at once to the mind is *La Grande Illusion*. In that film, Germans and Frenchmen, at a time in history when they should have been implacable enemies, faced each other without hatred. It was banned in Germany. And when immediately after the last war, it was shown in France, the press launched a violent campaign against it, trying to get it withdrawn. In all honesty, it must be admitted that the cinema which is nationalistic in inspiration does little to advance the cause of free international exchange of information which, by its very nature, it could do so much to help.

I am all the more sorry, when I think of the splendid purposes which this remarkable instrument for the spread of knowledge could serve. It is not my fault if men today, like animals shrinking from their own reflection in a mirror, are afraid to see themselves portrayed with brutal frankness on the screen.

THANKS TO THE CINE-CAMERA

SCIENTISTS ARE UNCOVERING A STRANGE, UNKNOWN WORLD

At first glance we are sure this is a painted African mask worn by some Negro warrior brandishing his arms in a typical ceremonial dance. In reality it is a magnified close-up film of an African cricket from the Cameroons.

by Maurice GOLDSMITH

THE film was born to do scientific work and not originally to entertain. Before the invention of the cinema, the French astronomer Pierre Janssen in 1874 photographed phases of the track of the planet Venus and about six years later the French physiologist Etienne Marey studied the flight of birds with a specially designed camera.

But the most impressive experiment that really begins the story of the scientific film was the demonstration in California by the pioneer British-born photographer, Edward Muybridge, that a trotting horse has all its four legs off the ground at the same time. It was Muybridge, in fact, who gave the first demonstration in Europe of scientific films. That was in 1882 in the theatre of the Royal Institution in London.

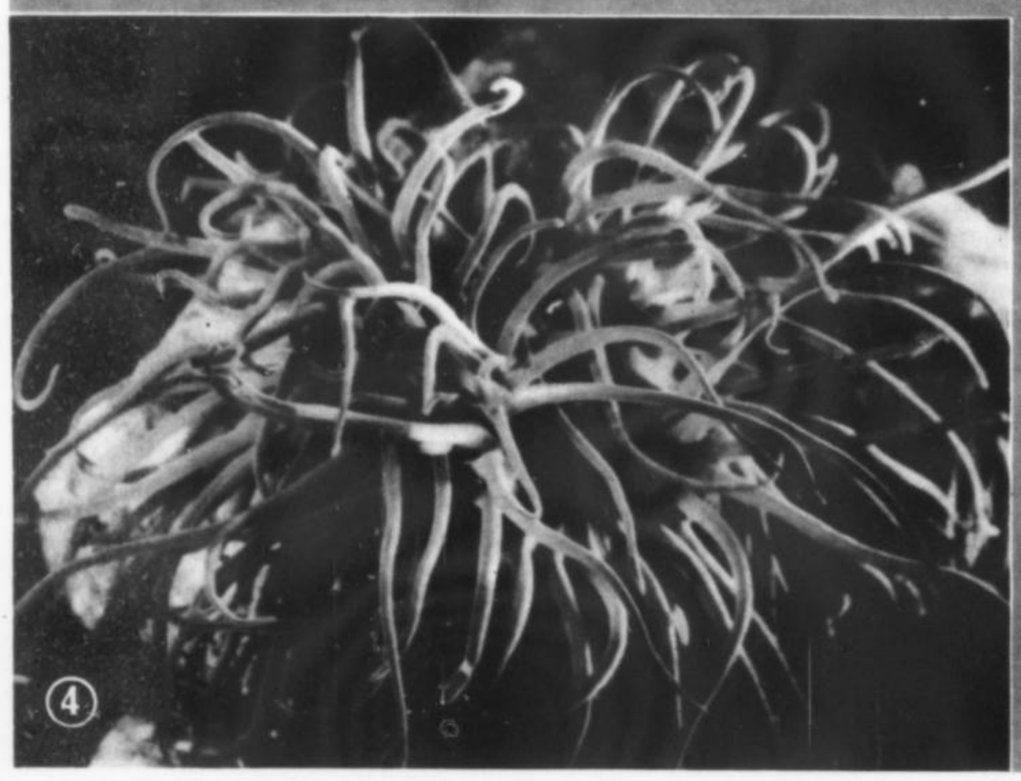
His lecture on "The Science of Animal Locomotion in its Relation to Design in Art" confounded critics who had declared that the reproduction of a satisfactory photograph of a rapidly moving object was absolutely outside the bounds of possibility. Their surprise was expressed by a writer in the **Illustrated London News**, who described how "by the aid of an astonishing apparatus called a zoopraxiscope... animals suddenly became mobile and beautiful, and walked, cantered, ambled, galloped, and leaped over hurdles in the field of vision in a perfectly natural and life-like manner..."

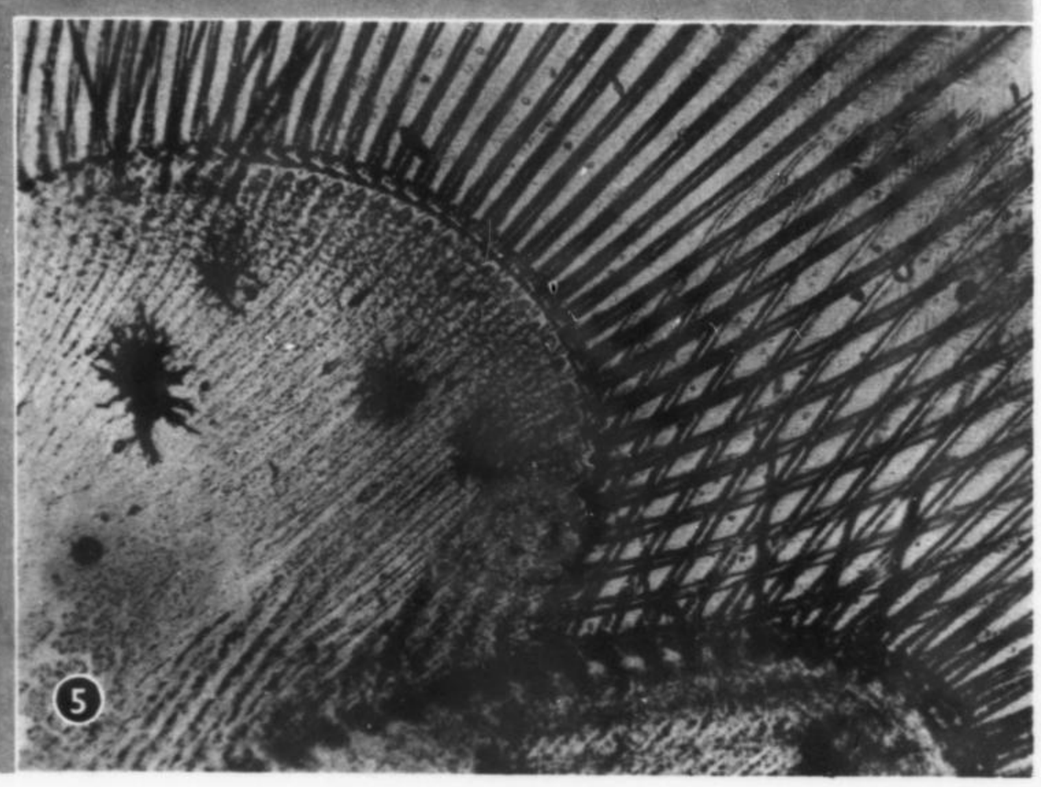
Today the film has an honoured place not only in research and investigation as a scientific tool, but also as a basic method of popularizing science and presenting its social implications.

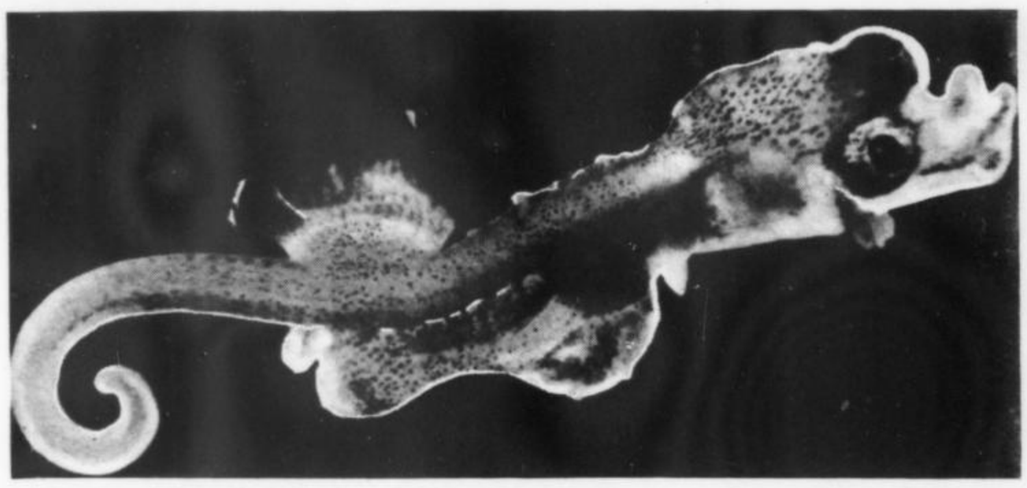
In the research laboratory the cine-camera is an indispensable tool because it is an unobserved and undisturbing observer; it is insensitive to atmosphere and fatigue; it can function for hours on end with a non-sleeping eye, without producing confusion and overlapping among successive images; it can delve into and uncover a strange, unknown microscopic world. In addition, the camera can act as a time-expander and as a time-condenser; and it can see things in wave-lengths invisible to the ordinary eye.

LINES AND CIRCLES

The eye of the crab **(1)** is (almost) enough to make the lover of shellfish lose his appetite; while the eyes gleaming above the huge mouth of this gentle little fish from Madagascar **(2)** are not very reassuring either. We can only see four of the many eyes of the spider **(3)** but they are definitely unpleasant. The sea anemone **(4)** boasts a secret weapon: a deadly liquid hidden in hundreds of tiny "buttons" covering its wriggling tentacles. The tail of a shrimp **(5)**, seen under the microscope film camera, has the warlike appearance of a hedgehog ready to attack. The camera clarifies what the human eye cannot distinguish.







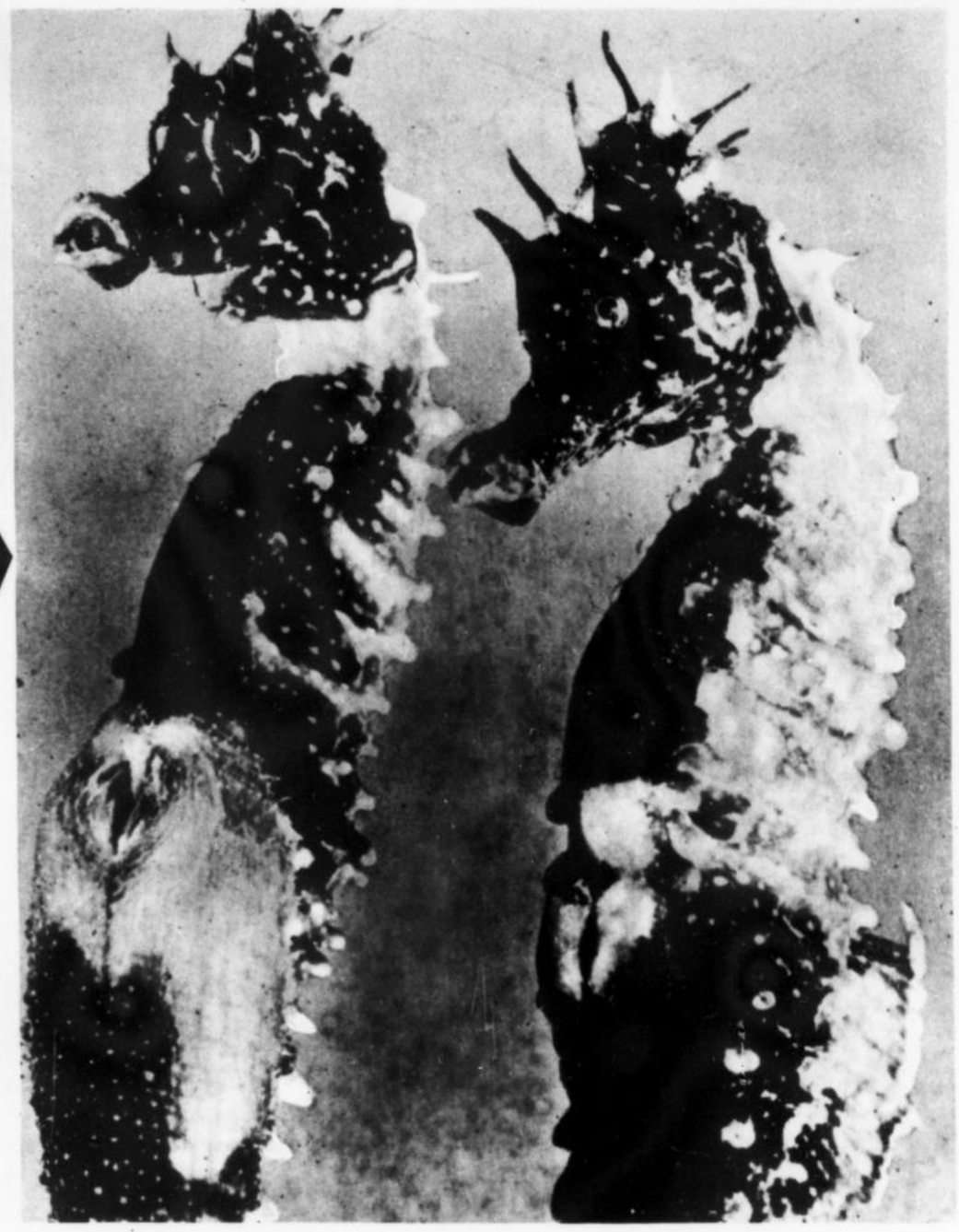
Baby Seahorse: horizontal. When the baby seahorse is born it assumes the horizontal position normal to all fishes and acquatic creatures.

★

Adult Seahorse: vertical. But when it reaches maturity the seahorse suddenly assumes a vertical position. It is the only vertebrate creature known that lives and moves in this position in water. Another curious fact: the male seahorse—not the female—gives birth to its young. The female lays her eggs in a pouch below the male's stomach where they remain for 40 days, and are fed by the male's blood until birth. Photo shows two male seahorses.

★

The Lobster and the Flea. The lobster's claw (left) bears a striking resemblance to a parrot's beak or a Commedia dell'Arte character. The fresh-water flea (right) reproduces by parthenogenesis since no males exist in this species.



Scientific photography is nearly half-a-century old, and as one writer has said "has brought many revelations of the beauty and harmony of the physical universe, and some notable extensions to our knowledge of it." In astronomy, for example, the film has added greatly to our knowledge of what is happening on the sun, particularly in the behaviour of solar prominences — so much so that far more problems have been raised than it has been possible to answer. In an American film **Explosions on the Sun,** it is possible to see in a few minutes changes that have taken hours to occur, and to marvel at an eruptive arch expanding at the rate of about 1,000 miles a second. In a field at Paracutin, in Mexico, in February 1943, a volcano suddenly came to life. Within a short while scientists came along with a camera and began a unique record of the birth, life and decline of this tremendous eruption of nature.

In the biological sciences, the first film was made by the Frenchman, Jean Comandon, some 40 years ago. "In our days", he wrote, "motion pictures are a necessity to the scholar who wishes to demonstrate to his colleagues transitory phenomena, delineate experiments or the general observation of things, beings or facts." At the Pasteur Institute at Garches, such films of his as **Champignons Prédateurs,** which deals with a curious fungus that preys on worms, and **Substitution de Noyaux d'Amibes,** which depicts the technique of the removal of the nucleus of an amoeba and its replacement by another nucleus, have been basic contributions to knowledge. His note on this last film begins : "For studying the slow movements of an amoeba, time-lapse and cine-micrography have been particularly useful and have revealed things which would not have been apparent by direct observations." The cine-camera can, in fact, be attached to microscopes, telescopes, stereoscopes, and all kinds of optical instruments which normally produce a picture for the human eye to see and to measure, and so a recording instrument of the finest accuracy can be produced.

In the medical field, living movements of lungs and limbs can be viewed repeatedly without danger of an overdose of X-rays harming the individual. It has been said that with the introduction of film the science of medicine has progressed so far that "the same patient can be used over and over again."

On the technical side, infra-red can be used to take photographs in apparent darkness. It was used to make a film for scientists anxious to study the contraction and dilation of the pupil of an eye when a bright source of light was switched on and off close to it. Ultra-violet illumination has been used, for example, to study the surface of red-hot steel bars. During the rolling process foreign bodies may enter the bars, but it is difficult to see what is happening because of the glare from the red-hot metal. Using a filter over the camera lens and illuminating the bar by either blue or ultramarine violet light, it is possible to photograph the bar as if it were quite cold.

Science is popularized on the screen through the documentary, the teaching film, and the feature film.

The documentary school founded by John Grierson has from the outset tried to maintain links between the specialist and the technician and the general public. The documentary is distinguished from the teaching, or instructional, film in that its job is "the creative interpretation of reality", and when it deals with science it is concerned with the relations between science and society.

John Maddison, president of the International Scientific Film Association, describes in "Experiment in the Film", edited by Roger Manvell, published by Grey Walls Press, London, 1949, two good examples of the documentary's power to interpret science. The first is Elton and Bell's **Transfer of Power**, in which within the space of twenty minutes the story of the evolution of a technical device is not only told with lucidity and coherence but is related to the social pattern. In **Blood Transfusion,** Rotha and Neurath drive home the point, with an ingenious bringing together of actuality, models, and animated drawings, that scientific achievement is a cooperative international business.

★

MADDISON refers to "the work of British documentary technicians in using films as a mass educational technique under Government and other sponsorships" and to its offshoots in Canada and elsewhere. "Its importance it twofold. It has illumined the social function of science in countless ways. In **Enough to Eat, Housing Problems** and **Smoke Menace,** it has afforded a pulpit to such progressive interpreters of science as Huxley, Haldane and Boyd Orr. During the last war, new laboratory findings and techniques for dealing with such problems as potato blight and scabies were made widely known to an extent impossible without the use of the film. More recently, **Personnel Selection** and **Children Learning by Experience** have shown how the camera can expound attempts to apply objectivity and good sense to the more delicate problems of human behaviour."

He adds : "Not less important than the new techniques of production explored has been the vast non-theatrical experiment in distributing films to audiences outside the commercial movie houses. Fresh images of scientific achievement have been carried into schoolroom, workshop, byre and forest clearing and the thousand and one places where men meet together."

★

THE teaching film is known to be a stimulating influence for both pupils and teacher. A study made in the USA concluded that "when properly produced and wisely used, the motion picture possesses distinct pedagogical values over and above traditional teaching methods on which the same amounts of time and energy are expended." It has been found that children studying by means of films have learned more than their colleagues who have not used this aid. Among the best of the British instructional films — and pioneer efforts when they began in 1921 — is the popular science **Secrets of Nature** series, begun by the late Percy Smith. They were often produced in two versions — one for schools, and one with a "popular" commentary for the cinemas.

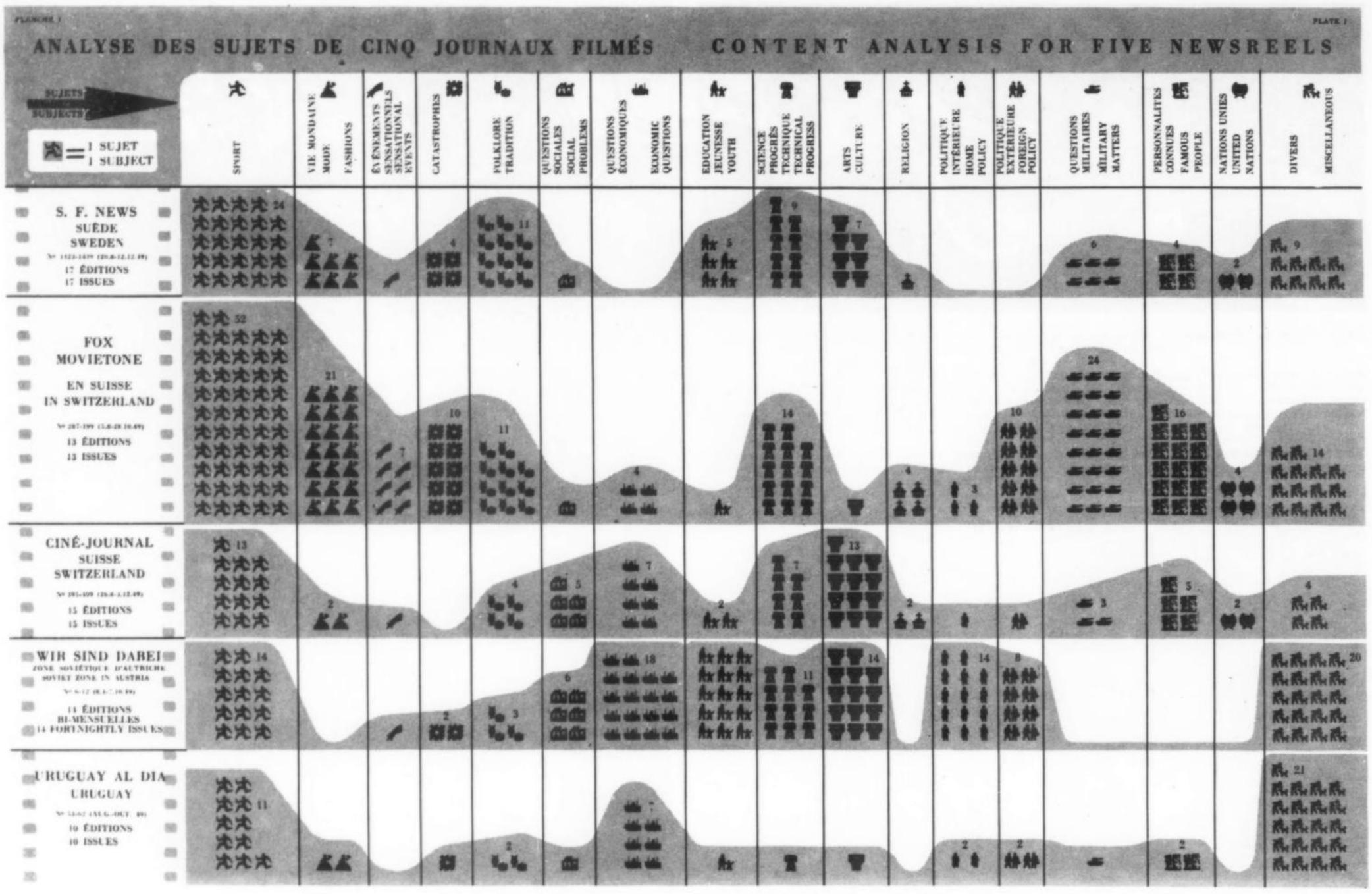
The feature film is essentially a form of entertainment. Therefore, little has been done consciously to depict science as an everyday vital force, but the effects of such films as **Pasteur** and **Madame Curie** have been very great. In this context, the development of the science fiction film is a factor of some importance. These films are very popular and some, such as **Destination Moon,** have not been offensive in their scientific content. The Russians have in recent years used the feature film as a serious medium with which to tell the personal dramatic story of great scientific personalities, such as **Zhukovsky,** the pioneer of Russian aviation, and **Michurin** the botanist.

Special mention must be made of the great contribution of the French and the world-wide recognition of the work of Jean Painlevé. Maddison describes how he has attempted "to create a new sort of scientific film biography for the ordinary cinemagoer. He and Georges Rouquier have made an absorbing study out of the biological work of Louis Pasteur in a film entitled **The Scientific Achievements of Pasteur.** Using an unknown unprofessional actor, a Paris workman with a strong resemblance to the great savant, Rouquier has made the scenes in which Pasteur fought against the prejudices of contemporary scientists, come to life again on the screen. But the main excitement of the film lies in the way which Painlevé, through innumerable hours spent with camera and microscope in the cine-laboratory, has retold the long tale of Pasteur's triumph over microbes.

In most western European countries there are scientific film associations doing important work in developing the use and understanding of the scientific film, and in 1947 there was formed an International Scientific Film Association. They are working for an end of great significance to society : to build up through the film a living unity between the scientist, the artist, and the man-in-the-street.

The photographs on these two pages are published by kind permission of M. Jean Painlevé, director of the Institute of Scientific Cinematography in Paris. These illustrations are all extracts from M. Painlevé's films.

Battle to the death. A dytiscid gets its victim. This underwater insect has no mouth ; instead two sharp hooks, leading directly to the stomach, inject digestive juices into the dytiscid's food and then suck them into the stomach.



THE NEWS REEL CAMERA:

AROUND THE WORLD IN 15 MINUTES

by Philip SOLJAK

THOUGH its potentialities have been only partly realized, the news film is a universal and powerful means of mass communication. Pictures can be understood by anyone, whether literate or illiterate, and make him an eye-witness, as it were, of the events they portray. In most countries, the weekly newsreel has become a feature of contemporary life, like the illustrated news magazine.

A report just published by Unesco (1) shows that each person in the world attends the cinema, on an average, five times a year and that most of the world's 100,000 cinemas regularly include news films in programmes. These films are classified as regular newsreels, film magazines dealing with current events or special topics, and general information or publicity documentaries.

Despite their world-wide range, newsreels have changed little in form during the past 30 years. In company with other films, however, they are now challenged by a powerful new medium — television. In countries where television has been developed, televised news has scored outstanding success and promises to become the major means of visual communication.

The story of the newsreel's development, as told in the Unesco report, is fascinating. The world's first films, dating from the early 1890's, were a form of newsreel and their producers developed the basic techniques of the modern film industry, such as the use of artificial light, camera tricks and techniques and the reconstruction of dramatic incidents.

From Nickelodeons to Cinemas

IN those days the cameraman enjoyed less freedom of access than he does today and newsreel makers often had recourse to "reconstructing" topical events. One of them, an American named Amet, staged a reproduction— in his bath— of the destruction of the Spanish fleet during the Spanish-American war of 1898. The film had an international success. Amet later created a sensation by reconstructing realistic battle scenes from the Boer War on waste ground in Brooklyn.

The demand for newsfilms greatly increased when permanent cinemas replaced nickelodeons and travelling shows around 1907. World War I gave the newsreel its great chance to assert itself and gain access to scenes of world events.

New films are today produced by three groups — private companies, joint undertakings with State participation or subsidy, and State-owned units. Of the 47 countries covered by the report, 40 together have a total of 160 producing units. Most of these, however, produce only "national" news films which circulate mainly in the country of origin.

In newsreel production and distribution, a comparatively small number of big film companies in the United States, United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union have built up international networks. These companies, whether private or State controlled, enjoy a predominance in film reporting, rather like that of the great news agencies. This primacy is often attained by the exchange of news topics and camera services, by the control of cinema circuits and by "block booking" of feature films with newsreels. A number of countries make national newsreels. But since a newsreel, to pay its way, must usually be shown in at least 1,000 cinemas, it is difficult for small countries to maintain their own newsfilm.

Largely as a result of these economic factors, most newsreels tend more and more to follow a uniform standard pattern. Emphasis is mainly on the "entertainment value" of items selected, which normally consist of sport, general news, fashion and miscellaneous material. The exchange of items among a few big producers — a useful technical expedient — moreover means that the same topics tend to be repeated in newsreels shown over most of the world.

The Great Challenge of Television

IN order to utilize fully this important visual medium, wider international exchanges of news items would be required, as well as the extension to more countries and producers of opportunities to obtain film material from any area.

Today, as television spreads around the world, newsreels are having to adapt themselves to the challenge of a new medium which brings scenes from near and far directly into people's homes. Recent developments in the United States and United Kingdom suggest that fully-rounded "film digests", of the documentary or film magazine type, will be increasingly seen both on television and cinema screens.

Films are Part of our Daily Lives

EXCHANGES of televised news items between the United States, United Kingdom and France are already under way. Such exchanges, while helping peoples in different countries to know and understand each other better, raise an important technical problem. The countries where television is most rapidly developing are those which produce new films that are shown throughout the world. Any rivalry arising between television and newsreels in these few countries will, therefore, largely determine the character, quality and presentation of visual news in other, smaller countries which do not themselves posses either of these two media.

Films have become part of our daily lives. Newsreels can perform a valuable service by highlighting important events and trends and by showing the ordinary man how his counterpart in other lands is living and meeting common problems. The parallel development of news films and television provides communication experts with a doubly powerful instrument which must be used with a full sense of social responsibility toward all men, regardless of frontiers.

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(1) *Newsreels Across the World (La Presse Filmée dans le Monde) : by Peter Baechlin, Swiss film expert, and Maurice Muller-Strauss, French film historian. Unesco Publication* 878. $2.00; 10/6 ; 500 *Fr. fcs. The present edition, available at all Unesco sales agents, is in French. An English edition is being prepared.*

EARLY NEWSREELS

1 1900: Visit to the Paris Exhibition

2 1901 : Queen Victoria's funeral

3 1909: First air crossing of English Channel by Louis Blériot

4 1910: The Seine floods Paris
(Photos Archives Cinémathèque Française)

THE CAMERA RECORDS CATASTROPHE

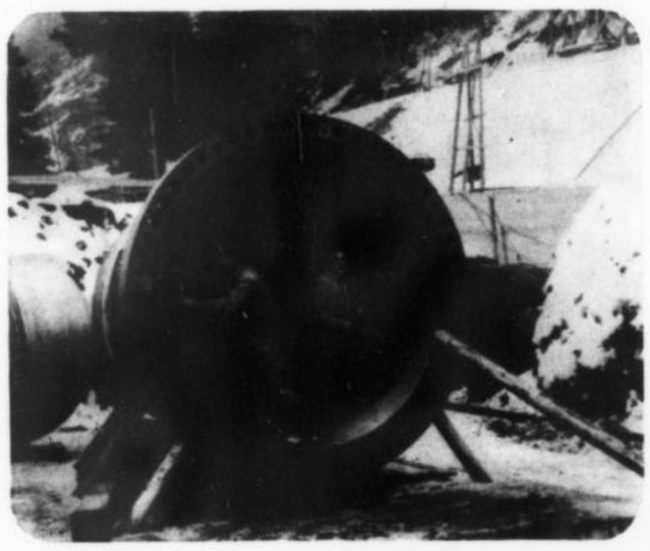
A helicopter crashes on a Welsh hillside (Pathe News)

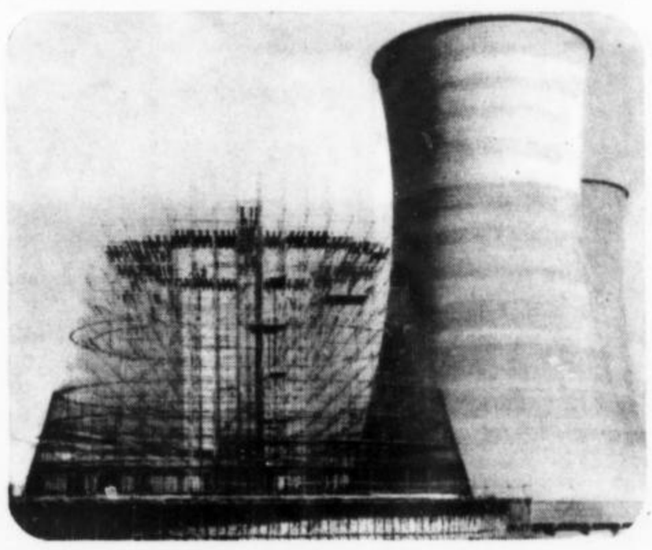
A ship torpedoed at sea during the last war (USIS)

THE CAMERA PRESENTS PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

President Soekarno announces Indonesia's independence (UN)

Arturo Toscanini poised for a concert opening (March of Time)





THE CAMERA RECORDS POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

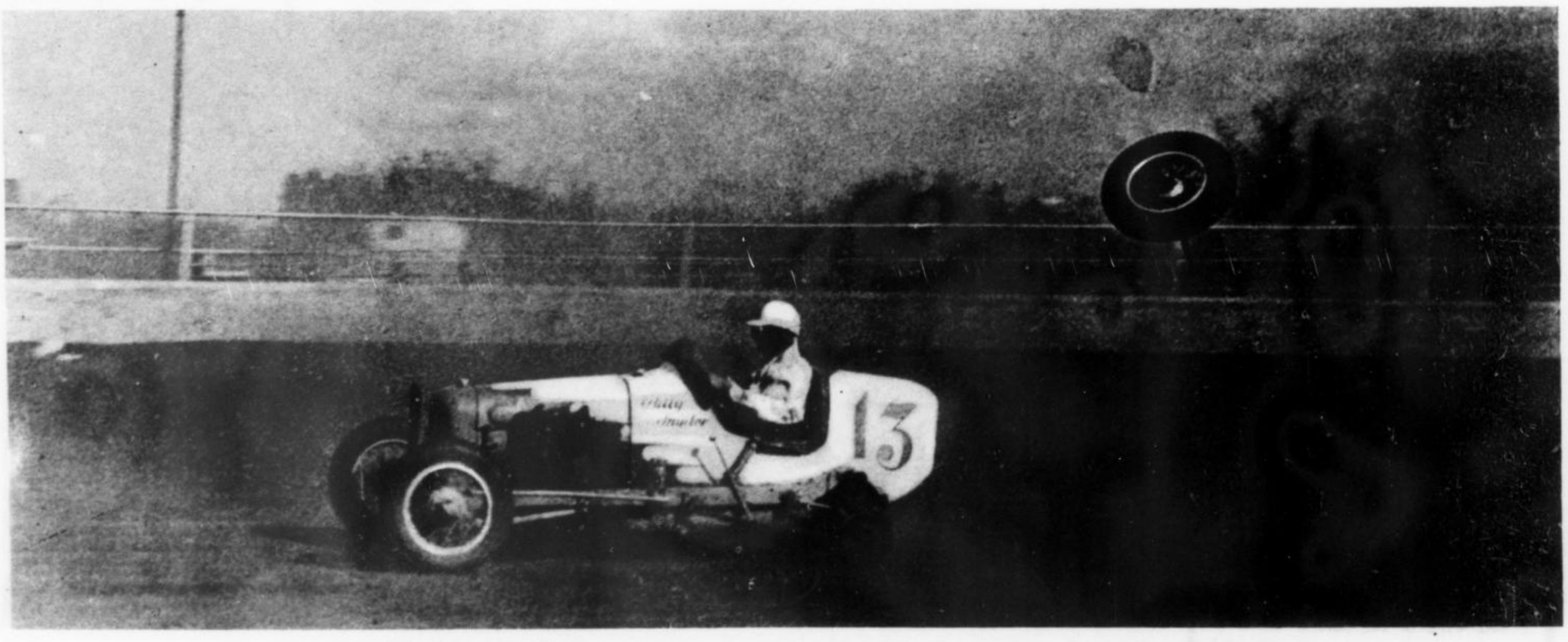
French speed work on Alpine hydro-electric plant (ECA)

Refrigerators will condense steam to drive turbines (ECA)

THE CAMERA RECORDS WORK OF U. N.

UNICEF provides milk for a little boy in Europe

Another boy discards his old shoes for new ones



THE NEWSREEL CAMERA RECORDS SPORTS : a split-second shot of an exciting mishap at a motor-race

A close-up from the Belgian film RUBENS by Paul Haesaerts and Henri Storck, showing Rubens' eye from his famous self-portrait at Windsor Castle.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ART FILMS ?

WHEN a producer makes a short-reel film devoted to a work of art or several works of art he may be congratulated for his achievement or he may receive a shower of brickbats. But whatever the reaction, it almost always comes from a small number of specialized film critics who, more often than not, are his own colleagues. The art film producer may even win some kind of award or other official forms of recognition to encourage him to continue his work. But what actually happens to the film? It is true that the film on art is a relative newcomer to the cinema. The first successful ventures of the Belgian Henri Storck date from 1936, while the *Inspirational Themes* of Dekeukeleire, the *Michelangelo* of Curt Certel, and the *Mystic Lamb* of André Cauvin appeared only before the war. But the fact is that the number of real masterpieces produced thus far in this field is quite high. That many failures have also been turned out cannot, of course, be denied. The art film producers themselves have recognized this and are constantly on guard to avoid the pitfalls of stereotyped presentation or mere imitation. That is why they keep hunting for new techniques, new ideas and fresh approaches more keenly than the "commercial" cinema does. But what do they gain in the end ? Once again, what happens to their films? Unesco has drawn up a list of 476 titles — of quite unequal worth it must be admitted — produced in 21 different countries (1). But ask the cinema-going public about them, those people who go to the "pictures" with almost clock-like regularity. How many have seen any of these films? How many have even heard of them let alone been able to enjoy them? (*On this page we give a list of some of the better art films. But how many of them have our readers heard of — or seen?*) In first-run and local cinemas the documentary stands a chance of being shown both in the big cities and in provincial towns ; so does the short scientific film. But films on art are apparently considered taboo because it has been "decided" that the general public is not interested in art. The rare occasions when the art film has been shown to the general public has proved that this is simply not true. In spite of this, Storck, Emmer, Haesaerts ans Resnais remain relegated to the "cinema clubs" and "art-film houses". Yet their films could, if given a chance, open a small window into the magic world of the painter, the sculptor and the architect for those who know even nothing of the arts. It would be a revolution. But it is perhaps too much to expect.

Georges FRADIER.

(1) Published in 1950 and 1951 as an appendix to the two volumes on « Films on Art » (4/-; $0.65 or 200 fr. frs.).

Most of these Art Films Are Unknown

ALBRECHT DURER : Die grosse Holzschnittpassion (AUSTRIA), Dürer's wood-carvings of the Passion.

RUBENS (BELGIUM), his life and work

LES FAUX VERMEER (BELGIUM), close-ups of Han van Meegeren's forgeries of Vermeers.

TIRADENTES (BRAZIL), based on the fresco by Portinari depicting the Brazilian national hero Tiradentes.

LOON'S NECKLACE (CANADA), an Indian legend portrayed with the help of original masks.

ART OF CHINA (CHINA), ancient architecture, paintings, sculptures, ceramics, embroidered silk.

NEJSTARSI UMENI (CZECHOSLOVAKIA), prehistoric art.

CHRISTIAN IV - SOM BYGMESTER (DENMARK), story of the Danish King who was called "the Master Constructor" for his influence on the Renaissance in his country.

L'AFFAIRE MANET (FRANCE), daguerrotypes, caricatures and newspaper cuttings recall the scandal in 1865 over Manet's paintings.

IMAGES DE LA FOLIE (FRANCE), paintings and drawings from the first world Exhibition of Psychopathological Art in Paris in 1950.

LES CHARMES DE L'EXISTENCE (FRANCE), satirical review of art shows between 1880 and 1910.

IMAGES MEDIEVALES (FRANCE), the Middle Ages depicted by 14th an 15th century miniatures.

DIE GOTTESMUTTER (GERMANY), the Virgin in Rhineland art of the Middle Ages.

EIN MARIENLEBEN (GERMANY), Marian sculptures by Heinrich Douvermann, 16th century.

LOOKING AT SCULPTURE (GREAT BRITAIN), a tour of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

MONT ATHOS (GREECE).

SAGA IN STONE (INDIA).

Il DRAMMA DE CRISTO (ITALY), the Giotto frescoes at Padua.

Il DEMONIACO NELL'ARTE (ITALY), the Temptation depicted by old masters.

LEZIONE DI GEOMETRIA (ITALY), how abstract art develops from higher mathematics.

MOSAICI DI RAVENNA (ITALY), Byzantine mosaics of the Middle Ages.

MEXICO PRECORTESIANO (MEXICO), architecture and craftsmanship of ancient Mexico.

BISKOPINE (POLAND), prehistoric art.

VAR GAMLA STAD (SWEDEN), medieval history of Stockholm and its royal palace.

MICHELANGELO : La Vie d'un Titan (A Swiss production, made in Rome and Florence).

FERNAND LEGER IN AMERICA : His New Realism (U.S.A.), narration in French by the artist on his life and work during five years in the U.S.A.

LASCAUX, CRADLE OF MAN'S ART (U.S.A.), a study of the cave paintings at Lascaux, France.

WORKS OF CALDER (U.S.A.), a visit to the enchanting world of Alexander Calder, famed for his "mobile" art.

A.S. PUSHKIN (U.S.S.R.), inspirations and work of the poet.

Maillol at work. A scene from the French film MAILLOL by Jean Lods.